THE SILKEN TASSEL

BY

ARDESHIR F. KHABARDAR

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TO ONE WHO KNOWS

If Thou knowest, then I know ;
If not Thou, then who on earth ?
Light has seen my outer glow,
Dark has felt my inner dearth.

And if Thou knowest, what more aught
Be brought to Thee by words that swarm ?
For words are shadows of the thought,
That simply show a shapeless form.

The veils dividing Thee and me,
Like clouds, are lifted by Thy grace ;
Take me in Love's eternity,
And hold me in Thy firm embrace !

Human love is love and grief :
Love the plant and grief the flower ;
In Thy heart I find relief,
Where Love and Joy grow in one bower.

Far, above, beyond, across,
I hold Thee ever in my thought
Thou art my gain in worldly loss,
Thou art my One in earthly nought.

For Thee alone my art did own
The pleasures of my darkest days ;
What if THIS *die unread, unknown ?*
'Tis crown'd with Thy love-lighted rays.

Then if Thou knowest, well I wait
My drop to mingle in Thy Sea :
In Springs of Light,—or soon or late,
We will be ONE *of Thee and Me !*

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INTRODUCTION

I am told that Mr. Khabardar is a popular poet in his mother-tongue, Gujerati, and I can well believe it on the assumption that a poet's wealth of ideas and metrical power is capable of spending itself through more than one language. In Mr. Khabardar's case it obviously should be so. He has lived and listened so closely to Keats and Francis Thompson and other masters of lyrical English, and he has made their speech and method so fully his own—in these English poems of his—that it is only on the rarest occasion that a close reader comes on an accent which discloses the foreign lip. If his technical mastery is so strong in a foreign language, his expression in his mother-tongue must indeed be as excellent as I am told it is. This gives one the feeling that, however fluently and sweetly he may sing in English of the joy of human love and Divine vision, one is still, in his English poems, only on the threshold

of his genius. My introduction of Mr. Khabardar is, therefore, somewhat complicated. I cannot introduce him as an Indian poet, for he is not here singing in an Indian language, and if he was, I should unfortunately be none the wiser. I cannot introduce him as an English poet, because he is not one. But I CAN *introduce him—as himself; as one who sings in this book melodiously and with fulness of that level of human life which is the common experience of all humanity, and (which is his special excellence) of that higher level of spiritual realisation which is familiar to Indian experience, and which may the sooner find utterance in English poetry by being voiced in the orient in songs such as these.*

JAMES H. COUSINS

THE SILKEN TASSEL

WHILE in the early glimmerings of Spring
My little feet were dancing with the flowers,
I found a purse tied with a silken string
Hanging out from the hands of honeyed hours.

The treasure that it bore was not of earth,
And yet it had the stamp of human face;
I hid it in my heart: I knew its worth:
One coin could buy all beauty's garner'd grace.

Since then I've walk'd the rainbow-paths of Life,
Amidst the orchards of the earth and sky;
This purse has help'd to win the time-old strife,
And link'd the distant heaven and earth more nigh.

And now, I spread the carpet of my soul
Before thy feet, and place this *nazar* poor—
The Silken Tassel of my purse unroll
And scatter its contents upon the floor!

SONGS OF THE MUSE

LITTLE FANCIES

Little Fancies come and go,
Like the little shades;
Little Fancies come and go,
Like the charming maids;
Come and go, go and come,
Like the peeping star;
Little Fancies come and hum
In our ears, and secrets some
Stealthily unbar.

Little Fancies, where ye live?—
In the wildernesses
Of the skies, where rainbows weave
In the maiden's tresses
Golden rays of love and light;
In the fleecy clouds,
Whereon shine the colours bright,
And their sunlit fleeting might
Charms the wondering crowds.

Little Fancies, where ye wander ?—
In the greenest caves
Of the lively minds that ponder
O'er the foaming waves;
Boundless floods and shoreless seas,
And the roofless skies;
With the wings of honey-bees,
And the ever-roaming breeze
That swells and sings and sighs.

Little Fancies, where ye sleep ?—
In the rose's bed,
In its petals soft we keep
Charms so rosy red;
In the light and glassy bubbles
Floating in the air,
Far away from cares and troubles,
Dreaming dreams of love that doubles
Joys and longings rare!

THE SPIRIT OF POETRY

I GATHER'D my rhymes from the songs of the stars,
I gather'd my words from the whispering winds,
I gather'd my dreams from the colours of eve,
And I gather'd my thoughts from the high-streaming minds;
I awaited the gleam of thy magical ray,
But, Spirit of Poetry! thou wert away!

I stood once in joy 'neath a rainbow's arch,
And I pass'd thro' its golden drops of delight;
My heart was so full with the throbs of thy love,
And my eyes were aglow with thy ever-new light;
I planted that rainbow here ever to be,
When, Spirit of Poetry! thou wert with me!

Then the plumes of the morn were the dreams that I dreamt,
And the music of rain was the voice thro' me rang;
The glow of the growing moon was my desire,
And the twinkling stars were the songs that I sang:
The world was my wingèd steed gaily to rove,
When, Spirit of Poetry! thou wert my love!

Can Joy be the shadow of Love ever here,
Can Beauty be wingless here ever to stay ?
Can Hope with her laurels crown ever the good,
Or the Season of Life ever flower in May ?—
The world is a vision : and what thou too showest ?—
Stay, Spirit of Poetry ! stay, where thou goest ?

ODE TO POESY

My eyes are glistening with celestial light:
    My heart is throbbing with pulsations warm,
    Like ocean-waves that leap before a storm:
My frame is stirring at the wizard might
    Of new unveilèd Beauty: I do hear
    The dewy footsteps now approaching near
                As of some happy Power,
O'ershadowing my soul in mystery:
I feel that thou hast come, fair Poesy!
    And woven a vision on my brow this hour,
Like sudden moonlight on a midnight sea!

Come, lovely Goddess! from thy heavenly home,
    Where thou art ever weaving thy sweet spell
    Around the heads that dream with thee to dwell
Beside a sea of joy, upon whose foam
    Thy rainbow locks are streaming; where thy
      breath
    Doth ever blow to heal the stings of Death
                That fears thy magic name:
Where reigns thy beauty all the gods among
For ever smiling and for ever sung:
    Where Wisdom, Virtue, Truth, Love, Hope
      and Fame
Are but the flowers to thy tresses strung.

Let dry Philosophy sow Hows and Whys
And reap a harvest of the grainless chaff;
Let Science hold her ever-changing staff
And labour all her life with doubtful eyes
To cut and link the Truth that e'er exists;
Their mind is smoky like the shadow'd mists
That flow and melt away;
Thine is the kingdom of a brighter world,
Where Truth has all her beauty's veils unfurl'd,
Where Love is Truth and Law that never stray,
And rules the heart of Man by thy voice thirl'd.

Come, gentle Spirit! take my heart in thine:
Come, I have known thee and have loved thee long:
Yes, I have known and felt thy presence strong
Within my mind that drinks thy dimpling wine,
Dissolving in thy dawn its moonlight dreams;
Oh, I remember when thy golden beams
Within my boyish heart
Plough'd furrows deep thy deathless love to sow;
More than in love, thence, in their meteor-glow,
I've toil'd to reap the secret of thine Art
That waters here my youthful Hope to grow.

And whither shalt thou carry me beyond
This thorny earth that quakes beneath her sins :
Far where the mellow Moonlight sings and spins
Her silken threads to catch the meteors fond ;
Or in the golden halls of Morn that brings
Proud Sunrise flying on his mighty wings ;
Or in the windless calm
Of flowery Eve, that kisses soft to sleep
Each lotus in its watery home, where deep
It dreams within the shade of bordering palm,
Through which the pilot-star of eve doth peep ?

For many a day and night I've worshipp'd thee
And ever shall remain thy bondman true ;
With thee I've sail'd through all the living blue
And loved to lie awhile among the free
And ever-blossoming clouds, the stars, the moon,
And other aery beings : till I, too, soon
Have felt myself a star,
A moon, a cloud, free-breathing in the air
Of liquid sweetness in thy shadowing care,
Leaving the world behind me far—too far—
To slip away into thy regions rare.

Thy regions rare !—Ah, yes, that land divine !
Where, by the twilight lake embroider'd thick
With lotus-stars o'er fan-leaves twinkling quick,
'Mid lawny hills and flowery woods that shine
In vernal splendour, on a golden plain
Fed with soft sunlight and the dewy rain,
I sit in joy untold,
And sip and sip and sip the nectar dear
From thy rich cup of light and love sincere,
O'erbrimming with thy smiles that e'er unfold
A brighter life beyond this raging sphere !

And there, within thy universe sublime,
I sit and sing my soul for one short hour,
And lose myself within the silver shower
Of glowing visions swimming in that clime,
And dream the sweetest dream man ever dreams :
But O ! the cup falls from my hand, and streams
The nectar on the ground !—
I rise and seek and search for thee in vain :
No lake, no hills, no woods, no golden plain ;
This is my chair, and this my world around !—
Why leave me, Poesy ? Come, come again !

SONGS OF NATURE

ODE TO THE KOKIL[1]

WHERE art thou roaming, Kokil, far and far?
O come into my little garden here,
Where every flower is moving like a star
That twinkles through the veil of midnight drear;
Thy song is wasted on the hollow skies
Which echo not, nor catch a dropping note
Of thy sweet melting heart,
And thus on dreary plains it faints and dies:
Ku-oo! and there my eyes so fondly gloat!
Come down, O Kokil, tell me where thou art!

When cold winds sharply swept the shivering land
And drooping sheep return'd home early eve;
While yellow leaves roll'd at some unseen wand
And gloomy clouds did mango-blossoms reave;
While birds lay closing fast within the nest
Their trembling plumes; I sat alone and sad,
For thou wert far away;
My spirit sank and shudder'd like the rest;
Ku-oo! and up I jump'd so gay and mad!
Come soon, O magic Bird, why thus delay?

[1] The Indian Cuckoo.

O mystic herald of the joyous spring!
Thy voice is like a trumpet to the heavens
That now unfold the living blue and ring
With thy shrill note that all the earth enlivens;
The birds now skip from bough to bough and twitter;
The clouds depart like screens upon the stage,
And leave their alter'd home;
The drooping leaves now move, awake and glitter;
As all, without thee, felt it was an age
Since thou hadst left for other skies, to roam.

And whither didst thou roam for all this while
And find a land of love and pure delight,
Where thou couldst so enjoy the verdurous smile
Of happy vales and leafy gardens bright;
Where softly spoke the opening buds at morn
And starry blossoms hung on moonlight-boughs
That swinging pour'd the dew
On golden earth, where hoary Capricorn
Did never show his snowy thorny brows,
Or Beauty ever those sad wrinkles knew?

Now when thy ever-rising raptures fill
The waiting world with thine own visions sweet,
And in thine echoes calling hill to hill,
Some message new, unheard, we gaily greet,
O Bird or Angel! Say, where thou hast been,
Thy fresher skies, thy soft love-scented air,
Thy mountain-heaps of flowers,
Thy greener woods and pleasure-shades between,
Thy sunny dome of light and azure rare,
And thy sweet music-haunted magic bowers!

What dreams are thine I know not, happy Bird!
Come down to me, that I may half conceive
Thy mellow dreams and songs unseen, unheard
On earth, where heavily our bosoms heave:
We know not how to laugh a rosy flood,
Or play to pallid cheeks our joy-string'd lyre,
To break to dimples deep:
Our smiles are bitter and our tears are blood:
We sow our precious flowers in flaming fire
And in our burning heaven we sit and weep!

Come down, O Kokil! speak to me Ku-oo!
And make my garden thine own springful skies,
That I may sing with thee thy love to woo;
O let me look into thy joy-lit eyes!
That Man should here a moment's pleasure get,
Which moves and wakes his sorrow-laden heart,
Is worth his life of pain!—
Where have thy echoes fallen? speak thou yet!—
Ku-oo, ku-oo, oo-oo—and off thou art!—
Where is the Kokil now? I sing in vain!

TO THE MENA[1]

SILVER-THROATED Mena mine!
All the honeyed songs are thine:
When young Morn comes silver-smiling,
Pearls on pearls with magic piling,
And with softest footsteps showers
Sweetest scents upon the flowers,
While her breath fresh, balmy, tender,
Opens all the lotus' splendour;
When bright Noon her golden arrows
Flings upon the Earth, and sparrows
Twitter, twitter in their nest
Soothing their young ones to rest
For a while from blazing skies
And with stronger wings to rise;
When soft Eve and Sun together
Many a green and crimson feather
Set within her dusky hair,
And she looks so wondrous fair,
That the leaping ocean-billows
Pluck some for her night-bed pillows,

[1] *Ménā*, the Indian Jay.

Where meek Eve and Sun repose,
Dreaming all night, calm and close :
Then I hear thy homely songs,
Simple, free from worldly wrongs :
Like the innocent joys of Morn
That with dew the flowers adorn,
Like the warmth of golden Noon
That holds Day in a gentle swoon,
Like the sweet repose of Eve
That a thousand dreams doth weave,
Is thy soft love-melting voice,
Which doth in its soul rejoice.

Simple-hearted Mena mine !
All the homely songs are thine ;
Let that shining Surya[1] sing
Songs of many a noble thing,
Of his majestic golden glory,
His sublime heroic story,
Of his high and tuneful thunders,
And his quick-inspiring wonders ;
Let that strange goat-footed Pan
Pipe as charming as he can,
To the forests and the highlands,
To the thickly-wooded islands,
To the winds and flocks and birds,
He, at whose swift-flowing words

[1] The Sun; the Hindu God corresponding to Apollo.

Fauns and Nymphs from woods and waves
Come out from their hidden caves,
Silent and all charm'd with magic
By his pipings sweetly tragic;
Let Gandharvas[1] in high heaven
Raise their music to enliven
Gods and spirits with their song,
Who around them run and throng
And derive a secret pleasure
To delight in Love's free measure!
Let the Kokil's piercing note
Sing of golden climes remote,
Leafy gardens, heaping flowers,
Living skies and shady bowers,
Beauties of the Land of Dreams,
And delights of springful streams;
Let the Bulbul sing and weep
His love for the Rose, and keep
All the night awake and sorry
Shaping his love-drooping story,
To the moon and stars complaining
Of his love's unjust disdaining:
Thine are songs of homely feeling
Right unto the heart appealing;
Thine are songs of simple pleasure
That unveil a hidden treasure
Of the sweetest homely joys;

[1] A class of demi-gods in the Hindu mythology, known as divine musicians.

Thine are songs for girls and boys,
Children, full of deep delights,
Strangers to all sins and spites,
In whose heaven-reflected eyes
We can read our destinies!

O sweet Mena! sing thy songs,
Simple, free from worldly wrongs;
Sing me of thy woody pleasure
Where thou skipp'st with joyful measure
On the fields with green corn waving
With a tune so soft and craving,
There forgetting altogether
Gloomy clouds and rainy weather;
Or within thy date-tree sitting
Quiet, close, thy wings unflitting,
Thou dost tune thy velvet throat,
When the eyes of farmers gloat
O'er the spot whence rains thy song,
And their boys soon run and throng,
Leaving in their fields their ploughs
To find thee in the date-tree boughs;
But thou fliest from that spot,
Like a dear uncagèd thought,
Leaving them amazed behind thee,
Baffled in their hope to find thee,
And thou seek'st another tree
To renew thy melody.

Give us, Bird ! thy guileless heart,
Simple-natured as thou art ;
Thou dost never dream of wrongs,
Sweetly simple are thy songs.
We are yearning for a note
That eludes our strainèd throat;
We forget what it could be
Greatness in simplicity ;
Or our spirit never slumbers
At thy simple heartful numbers !
We are diving in the deep,
But with empty hands we weep ;
We are plunging in the skies,
But they blaze and blind our eyes.
Thou art living in the Present,
Ever-cheerful, ever-pleasant ;
Thine are skies of light and shadow,
Thine the green-gold field and meadow,
Thorny trees and soft-leaved bowers,
Common grass and fragrant flowers,
Silver clouds and golden corn,
And an ever-smiling morn,
Tender heart and simple glee :
May we, Mena ! follow thee !

LALITA

LALITA sleeps beside a lake within her garden green,
The snow-white *hansas*[1] are as still upon the waters seen:
O soft her slumber glides along the eyes that now are closed,
As soft and sweet the evening breeze blows on the day reposed.

The bunyan, palm and mango trees, o'erarch'd above her sleep,
Repel the frisky sunbeams that thro' them persisting peep:
And soft the shadows slip upon her breast that gently heaves,
And Light and Shade play hide-and-seek upon the glossy leaves.

[1] The swans.

Like rose-buds are her eye-lids closed so tender and so light,
That through their half-transparent doors her dreams are fluttering bright:
And softly stir her limbs while in her dreams some fancy dips,
As moves the lotus when the *bhramar*[1] fond its nectar sips.

Lalita sleeps as fair and sweet upon the grassy green,
As on the sunset green the rosy smile of eve is seen:
Her head is on a heap of flowers that her rich breath inhale,
Her rosy-velvet feet impress the rose on poppies pale.

Her peacock-painted *saree*[2] doth her perfect form adorn,
Through which her arms and feet shoot out like golden bars of morn:
Her magic-streaming *choli*[3] her soft bloom of youth enfolds,
And her young overflowing love there carefully withholds.

[1] The wasp.

[2] A kind of cotton or silk cloth worn around the body by the Indian women.

[3] A kind of sleeved bodice.

Her radiant face doth tempt the heavens to make another moon,
Ah! Nature not to Mother Earth gave such another boon:
Her virgin light around her shines like the halo of the sun,
Which sheds her power and glory more than any saint has won.

Oh! she is made of flowers and light, innocent, sweet and pure:
The lotus, lily, jasmine, *gul-chhadi*[1] and rose allure
The souls of men to this their home of a million flowers' perfume,
And a million stars were emptied for her spirit to illume!

Sweet is the Moon half-setting on the sea that partly shines,
And sweet is *Shukra*[2] resting on a cloud with silvery lines,
Sweet is the Spring that sleeps within her green-gay woody seat,
But sweeter is to see a maiden sleeping lonely-sweet!

[1] The tuberose.

[2] Venus.

O soft ! her sleep is like the magic of a charmer's lute,
O soft ! her soul is swimming in the happy dreams of youth ;
O soft ! upon her rainbow-brows a world of glory gleams :
Ah ! who would not desire to smile within her virgin dreams !

LINES

Written on a Blank Leaf in Sir Rabindranath Tagore's "The Crescent Moon"

Where hast thou been, Oh Crescent Moon !
My baby Crescent Moon !
I waited for thee late and soon,
My baby Crescent Moon !
While evening came and shadows fell
Across the land and main,
I look'd for thee in frowning skies,
And look'd for thee in vain.

Well have I caught thee now within
My silver net of stars ;
Oh Crescent Moon ! thy light serene
My prison'd joy unbars ;
Though thou wert far and long unseen
In deeper darkening skies,
I heard thee beating in my heart,
I saw thee in my eyes !

To see thy smiles of blossoming light,
My baby Crescent Moon !
I long for ever in my night,
My baby Crescent Moon !
Fill up thy golden cup of love,
And pour thy light divine !
I see a hundred heavens conceal'd
Within that heart of thine !

SONGS OF THE HEART

MESSAGES

HEART to heart can tell its secrets, mind to mind can speak in silence,
Unheard thrillings travel o'er a million leagues of lands and seas;
All the world is full of voices floating on the air for ever,
And all space is charged with dumb innumerable messages;
Ears can hear and heart can feel the speaking silence in all places,
This wide dome is not a hollow, nor is dead this blowing breeze.

Let Marconi's aerial agent record through the air and water
Messages in its machines of a hundred various wheels and keys;
And the human brains find out an airy thread to link in triumph
All the rolling spheres and know their secret-working energies:
Heart to heart yet tells its secret, mind to mind yet speaks in silence,
Man *can* hear and know without them, aye, and even more than these!

THE SONG OF LOVE

Where the golden founts flow in ceaseless streams
And scatter their drops of stars;
Where the white dawn weaves her infinite dreams
And the silver gates unbars;
Where the vermeil tents drop slumbering shades
And the balmy breezes blow;
Where the blossoming light of the new moon fades
In the heart of eternal glow;
There I flutter about in the greenest glades
And sing to the world below.

When the halls of Space were hollow and dark,
And all was a soulless gloom;
When the cycles waited in awe for a spark
To raise the world from its doom;
When the wings of Time were folded over
Its eyes and ears long dead;
And the sleeping Truth there sigh'd to recover
Once more its long-slipp'd thread:
I piped my flute; and lo! they discover
A world wherever I tread!

I piped, and there all my sweetest words
    Flew to shine the stars of Night,
And the Sun and the Moon, like the golden birds,
    Pour'd over the earth my delight :
I piped, and Heaven there blossom'd in bliss
    And flower'd in joys divine,
And Time rose out from its own abyss,
    Like the Phœnix, to fly to my shrine ;
I piped, and Truth came running to kiss
    My feet and again be mine !

I come to the earth with the youthful Spring
    And charm her hopeful bower ;
I wave with the clouds which play to my string
    And I dance with the Summer shower ;
I drop and whirl with the Autumn leaves
    And blow with the west wind wild,
I slide with the Winter snow that cleaves
    To the earth which has long beguiled :
I come with the day and the night that weaves
    A thousand dreams like a child.

I fly over Fancy's rich domain,
For ever so fresh and green ;
I sing in the Kokil's springful strain
From the leaf-young trees, unseen ;
I laugh in the thunder's rolling sound,
I glance in the lightning's blaze,
I roll in the whirlwinds round and round,
I hide in the smoky haze ;
Or I slip away for a while unfound,
And suddenly come and amaze !

I smile in the rainbow's rings of gems,
I peep from the pearly dew :
I shine in the stones and the diadems,
I gloom in the sullen yew ;
I moan in the ever-crying cascade,
I hum with the murmuring bees,
I breathe through the songs of birds that braid
All the softest melodies ;
Oh ! I ring in the hearts of man and maid
And swell them like summer seas !

They say I am blind and I cannot see :
    Fools !—I have a million eyes ;
I find my way through whatever may be,
    I see through mountains and skies !
Wherever I go, I blow my spell,
    And all is fair and bright ;
They fall headlong in the fires of Hell
    Who hate me in despite :
I lead to Heaven the souls that dwell
    Within my God-fill'd light.

When this visible world will shake from its depth,
    And the spheres will crumble and crash :
When the souls will breathe their last-left breath
    And all will swoon in the clash :
Then all will come to my magical call
    And lie in my boundless heart,
For mine are the worlds, all great and small,
    And mine is the unscann'd art :
Oh ! I am the root and the end of all,
    And I am the whole and the part !

HE IS COMING

He is coming, he is coming,
He is coming down to me,
While the bees are gently humming
And the prison'd springs are free :
He is coming, he is coming,
With the Kokil and his song,
With the breath of breezes roaming,
Knowing I am waiting long.

He is coming with the thunder,
With the rainbow-sword beside,
And the clouds are rent asunder
While there wakes the sleeping tide.
He is coming, he is coming,
With the lightning on the sea,
With the waters' milky foaming,
He is coming down to me.

He is coming with the flowers
Of the morning and the eve,
He is bringing all the hours
For my sweetest dreams to live;
He is coming, he is coming,
Every moment mine to be;
And my heart is ever humming,
He is coming unto me.

LOVE'S DREAM

Let Love but once in the skies of the spring
Shed his undiluted tears,
For soon the autumn with light and shade
Will crop in doubts and fears;
Let the summer blow, and his smiles will bring
To him golden flowers of joy;
Ere the red bloom withers and green leaves fade,
Let none Love's dream destroy!

Love lives in a land of lily and rose,
And his dreams are budding flowers;
Where Life is honey and Hope is heaven,
And Tears are sunlight-showers;
His vision of joy like the rainbow glows,
And his thoughts like the moonlit stream:
Oh! where is the heaven so richly given,
But to Love's glimmering Dream?

THY SMILES

Thy smiles are like the sharpest blades
    That cut the hardest steel,
Thy smiles are like the softest shades
    That deepest waters seal :
Thy smiles are like the rosy flowers
    Bestrewn upon the snow ;
They hold thy sweet and secret powers,
    O Maiden ! thou dost know.

One smile—and I forget my thoughts
    That I could hardly gather ;
One smile—I love its gentle plots
    Like sunshine in cold weather :
One smile—and all my heart leaps up
    To tangle in its meshes ;
O Maiden ! hide thy magic cup
    That blinds all in its flashes !

No Summer Morn can ever match
    The smile upon thy face,
No Winter Moon can ever catch
    The glory of its grace;
No rosy Eve can imitate
    Its light like laughing flowers,
No other Beauty can create
    Its rainbow-wingèd showers.

I seem to fall within thy smiles,
    A meteor in thy light!
Forbear thy heaven-inwoven wiles
    Of lips and eyes so bright!
They cut my heart or crush my mind—
    All seems without them vain;
No other Heaven on earth I find:
    Smile, Maiden! smile again!

I WEEP, O LOVE!

I WEEP, O Love! Love sings in joy;
 Yet I do weep: O pardon me!
Would I be like a baby's toy,
A lifeless thing to pet and coy,
 Nor feel, nor hear, nor see!

I weep, O Love! my world art thou;
 Yet I do weep: O pardon me!
I feel my heart a desert now;
But when it holds thy image, how
 Can my heart lonely be?

I weep, O Love! I find no glitter
 In this bright Sun: O pardon me!
I cannot hear the birds that twitter;
Nay, why this life of mine is bitter
 If sweet love smile in glee?

I weep, O Love! I cannot keep
    This flood that foams: O pardon me!
My love has had its roots as deep
And sweet as life; how can I weep
    O Love! though I love thee?

I weep, O Love! Ah, wilt thou hear,
    Love loves not Death, but pardon me!
I wish'd that now sweet Death were near!—
But how to me can Death be dear
    When near and dear thou be?

LOVE'S STRUGGLE

O Love! you tell me Weep-No-More,
    That you I should forget:
Ah! had you known my heart before,
    You could not say thus yet!

That Weep-No-More makes me to weep
    My whole life evermore:
And every tear digs the more deep
    Your memory sweet and sure.

I cannot live without you, dear!
    And yet I cannot die!
I love to live for your sake here,
    And live to love and cry!

PARTING

THE raining Noon now sounds our parting hour,
While from thy love-embosom'd bower
My stony Fate now wrenches me away
Far to that evening dim and grey,
Far, far from thee, O dearest! where my heart
Will still imagine that thou art
Beside me, ever making my sad night
Bright with thy happy memory's light,
Although my heart is now but made its tomb
Which veils my joy within its gloom.

Forget thee?—Nay, my dear! that cannot be:
The ever-palpitating Sea
Lives in his ebb and flow, and though he seem
Calm for a while, like a fresh dream,
He stretches out his waving hands once more
And rushes forth to kiss the shore;
The circling Moon may seem to wane in light
And disappear from mortal sight,
But she is ever singing round the Earth
And fills her cup of love with mirth.

Farewell, sweet Love, if part we must at last!
    But all the Starlight of the Past
Will ever blaze within my night of loss
    And silently my heart will cross,
Reviving all our dreams of sweetest hours,
    Till all its quiet-glowing showers
Will melt into the twilight of our hope,
    And those bright gates at last will ope
To let the greater sunlight in! O Sweet!
    Then warm and close at last we meet!

INSEPARABLE LOVE

And thou art there and I am here,
 And what lands lie between!
My paths are in the dry land, dear!
 And thine are in the green.
Yet heart to heart in ecstasy
Our souls meet in the common sky,
They know not there the green or dry
 Or what hath been.

And though I muse, or walk, or sit,
 I seem to fly to thee
Where thou dost often sit to knit
 Some work upon thy knee:
I feel to see thy low-bent face,
Thy down-cast eyes, thy crowning grace:
Thou seem'st to feel me in that place
 And turn'st to see!

Or many a time within my dreams
 I seem to weep my lot,
Thou comest like a light that streams
 Upon my inward thought:
I feel thou standest by my side,
My face in thy embrace I hide:
There in thy raining kisses glide
 My tears unwrought.

O Dearest! though we're far apart,
 And the world be so unkind,
Our pulses beat from heart to heart,
 Our thoughts from mind to mind;
Nor Time, nor Place can part our Love,
The inner tie that God's Self wove:
What strength has aught on earth to move
 One thread behind?

LOVE'S DESPAIR

How can I live without thee, dearest mine?
  I gave away my heart and soul to thee:
  This heavy weight of dust is left to me,
Which gropes in darkness for thy light divine;
It yearns for light this earth can never give:
        How can I live?

How can I live without thee? No delight
  Can dawn on the horizon of my life,
  Where no Morn breaks her silver springs all rife
With sparkling dews, but ever in its night
Into a sea of tears she doth but dive:
        How can I live?

How can I live without thee? Here I see
  No face to feed my eyes with heavenly love:
  No smile to cheer my spirits dull and move
My pallid Sorrow into rosy Glee:
In vain I sit and moan from morn to eve,
        How can I live?

How can I live without thee? Like a bark,
Lost on the foaming sea without a sail,
Toss'd by the cruel winds, and the crew's wail
Is heard by none, under the growing dark,
Alone, against a frowning fate I strive:
How can I live?

How can I live without thee? Let them say,
The world is wide and pleasures come anew;
Its limits, ah, for me too narrow grew,
And hopeless joys for e'er have flown away;
They can no more this barren shore retrieve:
How can I live?

How can I live without thee? O my love!
Wert thou not mine for these ten million years?
Did we not find our inner selves in tears,
Though placed a life apart, all hopes above?
And still *this* life to be? ah no, forgive!
How can I live?

A COMPLAINT

Hast thou forgotten me, Belovèd mine?
    Hast *thou* forgotten me?
Hast thou *forgotten* me, Belovèd mine?
    Hast thou forgotten *me*?

These words do haunt my lonely day and night,
    And sing into my ears:
Each morn I rise in hopes of deep delight,
    And wipe my dream-sent tears!

But no! my morn comes pale as pale despair
    And throbs my heart in vain:
Red evening robs my patience, and I share
    My dreams of night again.

Is there no word for me within thy heart?
    No pity for my lot?
Does there no place or thing to thee impart
    Of me a brief fond thought?

WHY SHOULD I HAVE LOVED THEE, LOVE!

Why should I have loved thee, Love,
    If I knew that love was vain?
Why should I have loved thee, Love,
    If I knew that joy was pain?

Why should I have loved thee, Love,
    While the sea was roaring high;
While the stars that mock'd above
    Were the fires within my sky?

Why should I have loved thee, Love,
    If the eyes were losing light;
If old time did ever move,
    And the day was veil'd by night?

Why should I have loved thee, Love!
    If I loved and lost thee so?
If thy smiles my sorrows wove
    And thy double-rose my woe!

Why should I have loved thee, Love !—
    Ignorance or Innocence ?
How should I have proved thee, Love !
    If I had not loved thee once ?

LOVE AND BEAUTY

No bloom the season will outlive,
No flower outgrows its perfume sweet,
No full-moon e'er outshines the night,
No joyous dreams outsmile the sleep ;
The rosy dawn is lost in light,
The rainbow still has fleeter feet ;
And Beauty, ere a flower can give,
Lies wither'd like a mouldering heap :
Then weep, and weep, and weep !

My love is not a blithesome bird
That gaily flits from branch to branch,
But, like the Yogi's heaven-bound eyes,
It ever doth one vigil keep :
So when that other turns unstirr'd—
Thy charms his thirst can no more quench,
Wilt thou not then with hopeless sighs
Think of *my* love's devotion deep,
And weep, and weep, and weep ?

DIRGE

Hope, thou and I were long together,
In glorious, calm or stormy weather;
Thou smiledst on me, I know not whether
    To love or love me not;
We traversed fields and gardens gleaming,
And cross'd the vales and mountains, dreaming
That thou wouldst take me far to streaming
    Springs of light unsought.

Now where art thou, I seek thee vainly;
I rise to find my shadow only;
Hope, thou art gone and I am lonely
    With my dissolving dreams;
Gone to the gloom-inwoven hollows,
Where not a ray of joy but follows;
Ah! deep Night of Despair now swallows
    All my sunny streams.

Come Heart, now let us go and bury
Those faded blossoms there, and carry
The dust of all their moments merry
    To Memory's solemn cell:
There is a joy in hopeless sorrow,
There is a gleam in sunless morrow,
There is a heaven which earth can borrow
    Ev'n from the blackest hell!

THE GIFT OF LOVE

I loved and loved and loved thee, Dear!
And loved thee heart and soul;
And at the altar of my Love
I placed my being whole.

Thou couldst not give me what I craved,
Thou couldst not give, alas!
And thought I that without thy love
An hour I could not pass.

But I am still alive, to see
That I can live and love;—
And love thee more, while still I stand
In giving far above.

For, while the sun is pouring love,
He pours but light, to shine:
'Tis sweeter thus to give than take,
For giving is divine!

MEMORIES

A turn to the left,
And a turn to the right,
A hill but to climb
And lo! there is light!
A few steps to go up
'Mid daisies in dew!
And lip to lip, heart to heart,
I and you!

A turn to the right,
And a turn to the wrong,
A vale deep and ghastly,
And O! where's the song?
A few sighs to go down
'Mid daisies in tears:
And to remember all this—
Years and years!

THE WHEELS OF TIME

O MY dreams! come back a minute! What! no more now, that is all?—
Here I sit beside the sea-shore; hark, there comes a lightning-call
Through the long-forgotten moments, where Time's changing curtains fall.

Would not Time come back a minute, with the winds and with the showers,
While the leaves wore rosy-green and light embraced the trees and towers?
O, that I would give my lover not one but a million flowers!

I was proud and full of beauty: Beauty that is worst of wines;
Not the drinker but the cask that holds to drunkenness declines:
O the vanity, the folly! that a true heart undermines.

Beauty put the crown of youth and shone with an
emblazon'd sheen,
Beauty took the wand of magic and became the
central queen ;
I was proud and I was youthful ; I was hardly
seventeen.

And they came and throng'd around me like a
crowd of swarming bees,
And I stood between them stately as each raced
for my decrees ;
I was careless of their praise, though smiling at
their tragedies.

Oh, the Spring is full of colours of the flowers and
the skies ;
Oh, the Spring is full of music and the birds and
butterflies :
But the melting snows are treacherous : Traveller !
keep thy watchful eyes !

Life was but an art of fancies stuff'd with lighter
thoughts misspent :
Life was honey and the roses : life was ne'er a
true intent :
Oh, this youth is full of follies, pride and mirth
and merriment !

So I pass'd my days in glory of my beauty and my
art,
And I triumph'd in my trifles, while I saw each
breaking heart;—
I would rather rest my horses and would drive
these in my cart!

But within this storm of dust I saw the true gold
shining there,
And within the blown-out ashes glow'd a spark
with radiant glare;
And I thought this was my gem; but still my art
was full of care.

And he came to me, my true love—purest gold
without alloy;
And my art flew lighter fancies which with those it
did employ;
He was wise and tall and handsome: others' envy
and my joy.

Ah! he came to me, my true love: brave yet
tender to the core;
And he loved me with a love that youth had never
dream'd before;—
And he loved and loved;—I wish'd a life of loving
evermore!

But my art in all its motions was still reigning
there supreme ;
Though my heart was beating for him, it was
planning every theme—
Love burns bright in his own light, it needs no food
of art to gleam.

Thus the inner snake was twisting all my outer
being's crust,
Love was stung with bitter poison by the brute I
fed in trust :
What would of the snake remain, but broken lines
upon the dust ?

Many a milky moonlight-breaker dash'd against
the pebbly beach,
While I saw him weave with courage words of his
love each to each ;
And I talk'd of dimming starlight, drowning him
in sound and speech.

Many a pearl-embroider'd morning did we trace
the garden's shade,
Looking at the little isles of the lotus in the pools
inlaid ;
And he stepp'd with close-tongued patience, while
with butterflies I play'd.

Many an eve I found him gazing on the sun-sown
western slope,
Then through the dark on the world's a-million-
star-set horoscope;
And I eyed some brighter lines upon the brows of
drooping hope.

But where is the mind that leaves its vanity for
hollow shame?
Ah! where is the heart that rises all above its
shallow name?
Better die an honest fool than fan the soul's ill-
colour'd flame.

False is all the green that glistens on the heaving
noon-day sea,
False is all the red that furrows heaven's own blue
simplicity:
Yet man roams behind this mirage—or these
sufferings cannot be.

Let them fall and crush the seed that grows the
poisonous plant of yore,
Let them fall and grind the being and strain out
the unclean ore,
Till the serpent dies here trampled, and the world
smiles more and more!

Oh ! that Autumn's yellow lining deck the greenest dreams of Spring !
Oh ! that Evening's mellow purple streak the Morning's winsome wing !
That to sportive Youth's gay harp the stern Age lend a sober string !

Well—thus through the playful arches did my art in gaiety run,
Ever smiling, frowning, glooming, fleeting, like the Shravan's[1] sun ;
Sweet and bitter, light and shadow ; love with art was love undone.

Well, at last there came an evening—of my life the darkest day—
While I stroll'd within my garden, nursing every plant and spray,
Proud of all my rarest flowers that fill'd me with an ever-May :

There he came to me, my true love : every step a step of love ;
And his eyes through thick-set branches gleam'd on me like a tender dove,
With a hope that is the morning raining light from far above.

[1] The Hindu Samvat month, corresponding to August.

And he praised me and my garden; every plant
and every leaf;
And extoll'd each chosen flower; while swinging
between love and grief
Flash'd a sudden thought upon him brightening
him a moment brief.

There a rose in all its glory like a maiden stood
upright,
In among the whitest lilies smiled its rich and
dawning light,
And its perfume like the moonlight shadow'd all
the flowers in sight.

There he paused and look'd enchanted at that
heaven of flowery wealth;
By whose side a sunny moment gave the spirit joy
and health,
Where that rose perfumed of Beauty, set by some
mysterious stealth.

There he long'd and linger'd with some glowing
thought upon his brow,
Then he turn'd to me and ask'd me but that rose to
him endow—
Rose that bloom'd to mirror Beauty; but alas!
where is *it* now?

But I turn'd away a little, smiling lightly in my pride,
And I said I would not pluck it from such glory to divide:
Love and Rose are most alluring while they are not pluck'd beside.

Here the fading skies on earth their gloomy shades on shades unfurl'd,
Here the distant dark horizon with a tremble whirl'd and twirl'd,
And he seem'd to see here drowning in my garden all the world!

Slowly slowly from that spot his heavy steps regain'd the gate;
Slowly slowly darken'd wholly all the heavens desolate;
Slowly slowly lessen'd lowly then his heart its stifling weight:

" See, the wheels of Time are running, ever speeding on and on,
Now the sunshine, now the shadow, here the evening, there the dawn;
White and black their spokes are turning, ne'er returning what is gone!

"Ah! the wheels of Time are running, and the
glass pours out its sands;
Morning flies and evening lowers, and the night
sleeps on the lands;
From the bow once shot the arrow ne'er comes
back to human hands!

"Thus it is—and well, you wish'd so;—but I go;
my words are vain;
Autumn cries for Summer's joys, but Winter is her
only gain;
Ever-moving Time doth balance passèd joy with
present pain!

"Ah! that you now hold a flower dearer than the
heart's delight;
Ah! that you now find the lightning brighter than
the bright sunlight:
Fare ye well! enjoy your fancies! rolling Time
will set them right!"

Far and far my ears were ringing with the voice
that trembling moved,
Far and far my eyes did follow till his form a
vision proved;
Night was left all black and lonely, glooming in
the hollow grooved.

For the morn that follow'd brought a thrill through
all the country wide,
And the War of Nations shook all Europe and the
World beside:
Might and Right, Restraint and Freedom, fought
their fortunes to decide.

There the brave and loyal Indians stood firm by
the British cause;
None to flutter, none to linger; not a falter,
not a pause;
Forth they went with waving swords to guard
eternal Dharma's laws.

Ay, he was the first, my true love, to obey his
country's call;
There he went to fight her foemen for *her* honour
to install;
There he went, a gallant lion, and with him my
all in all!

There he fought and fell a hero in the doomful
Dardanelles,
Where his daring deeds of valour shook a hundred
Turkish hells,
Where his high unconquer'd spirit plunged in
scathing shots and shells!

And the story of his glory flash'd through all the
world afar,
Through the growing gloom of horror shone his
name a glorious star :
Victory or Death : the glory of a soldier who can
mar ?

There they buried him with honours that the battle-
field him gave,
From the king and from the highest richest flowers
adorn'd his grave ;
Blessèd are the dead immortal, blessèd are the
mighty brave !

Woe to me, and my *one* flower ! my one flower I
could not give ;
Woe to me, and my proud art, that left me ever
here to grieve ;
He had earn'd a million flowers, and he is gone,
and I should live !

Wheels of Time ! come back a minute ! come, O
come for me but once !
Leave my dreams their truer flowers and take from
heavens a million suns !
Come back once, and see the current of my life
where rightly runs !

Would the wheels of Time return not? What! his
words were deadly true?
Here I sit beside the sea-shore, looking at the
changing blue,
Through the ever-echoing moments where gets
every deed its due!

Would the wheels of Time return not, with the
winds and with the showers,
While the shadows piled so thickly and light left
the trees and towers?
O, that I would give my lover not *one* but a
million flowers!

THE WEAK SPOT

He spoke to Gul with all his heart,
And yet she stood unmoved;
He spoke to her with feelings smart,
And yet as hard she proved.

He told her of his sleepless nights,
He told her of his dreams;
He told her of his lost delights,
And of those distant gleams.

He spoke to her of all her charms,
And all her winning ways;
He said his soul was wrung with storms
For her a thousand days.

Yet, like a stony statue, there
She stood unstirr'd for long:
He turn'd, and with a lighter air
Then sang another song:

" O, Perin loves me with a love
Fain I would seek in thee ;
And Soona holds me far above
Her heart's felicity :

" And Banoo is so beautiful !
And who can more so boast ?
And glorious are her— " ;—there said Gul,
" I love thee, dear, the most ! "

RADHIKA'S PERPLEXITY

I KNOW not what *Kahn*[1] has seen in me,
How often he looks at my face!
His eyes are quicken'd to steal my heart,
I stand like a statue to see him depart,
And glance at his charming grace;
I call to the birds in the mango grove,
And turn for their sweet reply:
"Radhika! Radhika! here are the birds!"
I hear there someone cry;
I turn again and he looks in my face
And laughs and passes by!

I carry my pots to the village-well,
When the dawn has lifted her veil;
Slowly and slyly he comes behind
Like a *chittah*,[2] and suddenly there I find
His shadow before me trail;
I fill my water-pots on the well,
When stealthily he comes nigh,
He lays them on my head uncall'd,
"Oh Radhika! 'tis too high!"
I turn my face, but he looks in my eyes
And laughs and passes by!

[1] A pet name of Shri Krishna.
[2] A leopard.

I take to Gokul[1] my sweetest curds,
When the herd is on the field;
He blocks my way with a wayward spring,
And asks of me there many a thing,
But I do not care to yield;
I walk away with a gentle push,
As the sun is high in the sky,
I hear my name through some magical flute
And I turn behind to spy:
My curds fall down and he looks in my face
And laughs and passes by!

[1] The village in which Shri Krishna lived in his childhood.

THE FLUTE OF KRISHNA

Blow, Krishna, blow thy flute!
Thy soul is streaming through its words,
And all the woods are mute;
And dumb are all the twittering birds,
And quarrelling wives leave their dispute,
Hearing thy magic-flute.

Play, Krishna, play thy pipe!
It shines with all thy spirit's light,
Deck'd with the rainbow-stripe;
The shut buds open fair and bright
And take their colours from its type,
When gleams thy glorious pipe!

Blow, Krishna, blow thy flute!
Thy love has flooded all our homes
And we run charm'd and mute!
The wind no more in forests roams;
We come to thee all, man and brute,
And ever hear thy flute!

Play, Krishna, play thy pipe !
The trees lay out their boughs unseen
And fruits grow red and ripe ;
Blow high and low !—thy voice serene
Will from our hearts our sorrows wipe :
Thy joy-unfolding pipe !

THE THREE IN ONE

THROUGH the long lone lane of the dim dull dawn,
With a strong grim struggle with numb-cold night,
Lo! a golden spark from the bold sun shone—
And there was Light!

While the whole high heaven was a soulless space,
And like cold clay seem'd all the green earth's grove,
There a warm ray smiled with a new-known grace—
And there was Love!

On the deep dry sands of the gloom-set shore,
When a wide world lay in seraphic strife,
Ran a thrill and throb through the dreamless ore—
And there was Life!

Oh, this Light, Love, Life: each has blameless bloom;
And they all in one with a green thought grew:
Oh, my Light-Love-Life! when I grope in gloom,
Say, where are *you*?

SONGS OF LIFE'S HIGHWAY

THE GREATEST KING

"I AM the King of Earth:
All golden is my seat:
I have a royal birth,
All fall before my feet;
They fear my mighty power,
They tremble in their heart;
I sit within my tower
And use my gracious art."
Thus speaks the King of Earth
In dreams of Joy and Mirth:
The wind there passes by
With a sigh!

"I am the King of Kings:
Their destiny I guide:
My word is law and rings
Through countries far and wide;
Full proud my banner waves
And flashes round my glory,
Fair Victory e'er engraves
My name in the World's story."
Thus speaks the King of Kings,
His praise in pride he sings:
The stars look down awhile
With a smile!

Who is the Greatest King,
Whom all the worlds obey?
Whose little frown can fling
The suns in dark decay?
All heavens in whose heart
Lie like a helpless child,
Where worlds on worlds depart
In desolation wild?
Where is the greatest King,
Whose praise is worth to sing;
Whose god-crown'd majesty
Great must be?

The rivers flow and flow,
The oceans roll and roll;
The winter winds do blow
On earth from pole to pole;
Time ever fills his cup
And empties in the skies,
His billows creeping up
Sweep down there all that lies.
Nor wealth, nor name, nor power
Can twinkle for an hour;
The deep dark veils of Time
Blot its prime!

IN THE FIRE-TEMPLE

I

BRIGHT is the morning, full of flowers,
Bright is the hope of youth ;
Fair are the dreams of riches' powers :
What is that thing like Truth ?
What is that old Ferishta's story ?
Gold, O gold is the life's true glory ;
Piety ?—all uncouth !
    Fair is the weather, light is the boat ;
    Life must have its merry sweet note ;
    Flesh for flesh, and wine for the throat :
    Who could then enslave us ?—
        Avākshe-pashémān, Avākshe-pashémān,[1]
        Dādār-Ahurmazd,[2] save us !

[1] The orthodox Parsees generally utter these words (which are from their daily prayer), meaning "I repent for and abstain from it," whenever they do or hear of anything that is sinful.

[2] The Almighty God, as addressed by the Parsees.

II

Dark is the evening, full of thorns,
Dark is the path of age ;
Bitter the wails of the heart that mourns :
What is the world but a stage ?
Where is the garden of *Ahriman's*[1] wonder ?
Where is the laughter of lightning and
  thunder ?
Has the fool turn'd a sage ?
    Low is the light, and short is the sight,
    Helpless shakes now the merry-old knight;
    Life has lost its fight and right :
    O the lesson it gave us !—
        Avākshe-pashémān, Avākshe-pashémān,
        Dādār-Ahurmazd, save us !

[1] The evil spirit which is the eternal enemy of Good and the enticer of men.

THE PEAK

A PEAK in the distance,
A spot in the skies,
That evermore glimmers
Alluring the eyes.

The nearer we go there
The farther it seems,
The labouring footsteps
Run faster in dreams.

The colours are charming,
The odours are sweet,
The light is love-tinted
That beacons our feet.

The shadows are floating
Before us so deep,
The winds are so hissing,
The path is so steep.

The feet slip in hurry,
We tumble and rise ;
And tumbling we gather
The roses in prize.

And up we go rising,
The stronger we feel ;
The sterner the purpose
The keener the zeal.

The Peak in the distance,
Ah ! brighter it seems,
The farther we go there,
The nearer it gleams.

The shadows are floating
Before us so light,
The winds are so singing,
The path is so bright.

O Traveller ! look not
Behind thee nor wait ;
Go forward and forward
To win thy estate !

The Peak will be by thee,
And thou on the Peak :
There thou wilt acquire
What here thou dost seek.

O ever and ever
Is clearer thy way ;
Thy tumbling will strengthen
Thy spirit in clay.

The Peak in the distance,
The spot in the skies,
Will evermore glimmer
Alluring the eyes.

THE LIFE BEYOND

Oh World! thy flower but hides the thorn,
Black night but follows every morn,
Within thy pot of Joy is born
The plant of Grief:
Here Man is ever weary and worn,
Without relief;
Thou hast but broken arcs of light,
Thy Beauty is half-drown'd in blight,
Thy Love is scatter'd light in night.

Thy good is nipt within its bud,
Thy golden streams are stain'd with mud,
Thy songs are wrought of tears and blood
For smiling bloom,
Thy music is lost in the flood
Of raining gloom:
What smiles will scatter roses pure?
What hopes the noblest fruit ensure?
What power our highest thoughts endure?

Oh ! that I dive below thy deep,
A deeper deep, where I can creep,
Not in thy half-unconscious sleep,
        But in *my* light,
Or that I higher soar and sweep
        Beyond thy height :
To gain my sight a larger scope,
The glorious gates of *mind* to ope,
To reap the harvest of my hope !

There Life is real, Life is true :
There life is Joy, all through and through :
A perfect Art, and Justice due,
        And solid Good :
Of many a sweetest sound and hue
        A Brotherhood :
Where every height doth higher prove,
Where Thought is Power all things above,
Where Love is Light and Light is Love !

THE FAR-OFF MAN

How long shall the earth be made a heartless stage for warring nations?
How long shall the e'er-increasing hunger for high power prevail?
How long shall the grinding teeth of human greediness torment us?
How long shall the bark of knowledge yet in darkest oceans sail?
When shall be this hell-hung shadow lifted from the eyes of ages?
Shall the hope of Prophets always tumble in despair and wail?

Man is still the speaking brute with peeping claws within his bosom,
Man is still the houseless creature on the barren shores of Time;
Man is still the changing shadow of his Spirit moving onward,
Man is still the tiny ant that struggles in the heated slime:
Man is climbing yet the lower steps of Nature's glorious ladder,
Man is far from human Spring, and Earth has not yet reached her prime.

Yet this hissing red-hot iron will some lovelier form be given,
Yet within this seed is seen the tree, the flower and the fruit :
Yet this struggling streamlet has to pass through, by the hills and valleys,
Rocks and stones with weeping bubbles for a fuller-flooded route :
Yet through all these jarring notes a far-off richer music rises,
And a greater godly Man is springing from this earthly brute.

Every drop of blood that falls will turn itself to choicest ruby,
Every tear will shake and be a diamond shining on the way :
Every gloom will bloom in light and Earth will smile a glowing Heaven,
Man will be the perfect sum of Spirit and the clashing clay :
Man will rise the purest god of peace and bliss from out his ashes,
And this bud of Morn will open in the perfect flower of Day !

THE RIDDLE OF LIFE

Duty feels but it can move not,
Love appeals but it can prove not;
Heart entreats but Reason hears not,
Hope doth tremble but Truth fears not.

Life has Freedom, Life has Splendour,
Life has all the visions tender;
Yet in all its circled pleasure
It must keep its central measure.

Joy is full of wingèd glory,
Like a fairy's dreamland story;
And that proud and giddy Power
Is like Noon's most dazzling hour.

Duty feels when Wisdom lights it,
Love approves when Suffering rights it;
Reason hears when Heart is selfless,
Truth succeeds though Hope be helpless.

Life is Virtue, Life is Duty,
Life is but one painful beauty :
Then in all your circled pleasure
Keep for aye its central measure !

THE JOURNEY

I JOURNEY'D far and far,
In the country of old Life,
Where the twinkling of a star
Was the signal of all strife;
Where the weary day was blind,
And the night was veil'd all o'er;
For the light was all behind
And the dark was all before.

I journey'd far and far,
In the country of new Life,
Where the smiling of a star
Scatter'd all the feud and strife;
Where the night in gems entwined
Paced the day's enflowering floor;
For the dark was all behind
And the light was all before.

I journey'd far and far,
In this country new and strange :
I pluck'd a glowing star,
And lo ! I saw it change :
The flower of Joy consign'd
To the soul's eternal shore ;
And the dark was all behind,
And the light was all before !

SWEET DEATH

Death, icy Death, I welcome thee on earth!
Thou soothing spirit of this woeful world,
Whose temples ever beat with grappled pain
And brows are burning hot with blazing fire:
Sweep through her shaken heart thy snowy robe,
And give her at thy feet a sweet-cold peace!
Come, icy Death, I welcome thee on earth!

Thy voice is shivering to the sinful ears:
They know not thee, who call thee cruel names,
They know not thee, who see thee black in form;
Thy face is whiter than the milky swan
That swims on silvery lake so calm, serene;
Thou art more kind than kindest thoughts can be:
O gentle Death, I welcome thee on earth!

When hopeless fancy finds a trembling fate
And all the world a starless darkness seems;
When heart can bear no longer lingering stings
And life her brightest plumes enfolds within:
When like the dropping petals, one by one,
Our loving ones before us pass away:
O come, kind Death, I welcome thee on earth!

Soft as the starry footsteps of the Night
That comes to calm a hot tumultuous day;
And peaceful as the silent-gleaming lake
That holds in heart another glimmering heaven;
Fair as the rainbow-bridge that shining stands
And hails our spirit to a higher world:
Come thou, sweet Death, I welcome thee on earth!

AN INDIAN FUNERAL SONG

WHAT are your smiles of the golden morn,
And what are your pearly tears?
What are your strifes for a hope forlorn,
And what are your swords and spears?
What is the hollow delight that assures you
A transient bliss that nothing secures you?—
All are the charms of the *Māyā*[1] that lures you
To an ever-receding gleam:
Rām bolo, bhai Rām,
Rām bolo, bhai Rām,
The world is all but a dream!

What are your marble towers and halls,
And what are your gardens and flowers?
What are your gem-deck'd turbans and shawls
And what are your kingly powers?

[1] Illusion which causes one to regard the Supreme Spirit and the Universe as two distinct realities (in the Vedanta Philosophy).

What is your strength when the earth will shake
you ?
What are your knowledge and wealth that make
you ?
For *Yama* [1] is waiting to call and take you
From these glories that seem :
Rām bolo, bhai Rām,
Rām bolo, bhai Rām,[2]
The world is all but a dream !

[1] The God of Death, Pluto.

[2] A cry used by the Hindus while carrying the dead body to the burning ground, meaning "Brothers, take the name of God!"

SITA-RAMA

WHILE the infant hours of morning
Glide so playful by the door,
And the village-women hasten
To the Ganga's holy shore;
While the maidens gather flowers
Under fragrant jasmine-bowers
For the temple-god and go;
Suddenly a voice there towers
Over all below:
Sita-Rama, Sita-Rama,
Sita-Rama, Ho!

Like the flying pansies, wheeling
Flutter while the butterflies,
And the busy moments gather
All the fruits of toiling skies;
While the full-blown flowers are gleaming
In the noontide's golden dreaming
Of the hopes that ever grow;
Hark! the words there loud and streaming
In the long street flow:
Sita-Rama, Sita-Rama,
Sita-Rama, Ho!

While the temple bells are ringing
At the slow-departing day,
And the closing lips o' the lotus
Kiss the last and lingering ray ;
While the village-wives are burning
Purest incense with a yearning
For their joy and peace below ;
Oh ! the echoes there returning
With the breezes blow :
Sita-Rama, Sita-Rama,
Sita-Rama, Ho !

THE RELEASE

Now all is calm!
  The heaving billows sleep upon the sea;
  The stars reflect a vast eternity:
Let me now win my palm!

Unlock the door!
  Too long it prison'd me within the walls;
  Though sweet the hostess and her charming halls,
I stay not any more.

Hush! peace be mine!
  The shadows slowly lift before my eyes;
  I follow Him Who scales the opening skies
Where unseen glories shine.

Soft, tenderly!
  O lesser World! I seek my larger Love:
  One breath is here—one last and winning move,
Another—where is He?

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SONNETS

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TO......

WHILE in the narrow labyrinths of Time
My fancy moved to all that nourish'd mind
And heart, that throbb'd for every human kind,
And sought for Spring within her fullest prime;

While Love was still within his rosiest clime
And wanted every greenest leaf to bind
Upon his brows, and fondly roam'd to find
One whereon he might pour his wealth of rhyme;

One summer evening, by a greenest lea,
My wonder'd eyes caught glimpses of thy soul,
Like Venus shining on a wintry sea,

And found that living, smiling Spring in THEE,
Where Love and Light made one harmonious whole:
So thou hast been, so thou may'st ever be!

BEHIND THE VEIL OF LOVE

Love sees himself in everything he sees ;
He hears himself in every speech and word
That in his twofold ears is strangely heard ;
His days are not his own ; his nights but freeze

In ever-moving dreams of hopes and pleas ;
In every touch he feels his image spurr'd,
As by the gentle-footed zephyrs stirr'd
The waters move, as by the blasting breeze.

He is his all : in double-living hours
He sees his life apart, yet lives his own !—
A puzzle not unravell'd yet, still flowers

In untold bliss ; and, while he kisses one,
Behind those lips he feels the lips he dreams,
And all the world to him soul-mingled seems !

LOVE AND TIME

Stop still, O Time! run not thy sands awhile,
O passing Present! just prolong thy hours!
While Love is culling all the sweetest flowers
That gods have left behind them to beguile;

While Love sits all within his heaven-girt isle
And wields his strong yet soft soul-soothing powers,
And sips the nectar drawn from long-dried showers
Pour'd by the heavens for mortals here to smile!

—Time stops not for a moment so divine:
Already he is miles away and mocks
Love that his flowers and nectar are but dreams;

Love laughs and says: "This fleeting world be thine!
It dries, and with it all thy running streams
My throne is far above thy measuring clocks!"

THE MEASURE OF LOVE

THOSE that are hurl'd in hell are damn'd and done;
But here, within thy glorious heaven, O Love!
Where joy and bliss should reign all things above,
Why all this pain and sorrow? Beloved one!

How can these sharp-edged shadows cut and run
The light from heart and eyes, and ever move
Tormenting all the being, but to prove
That Love is not all heaven and not all sun?

How can we measure thee, O Love? Thou art
A rainbow bright between a smile and frown;
Thy twilight wings set night and day aglow:

For while we stand by thee with throbbing heart,
We trembling dream a scaffold or a crown,
And thread-like hang between thy Yes and No!

THE MIRACLE OF LOVE

Oft have I felt within my heart a power
That throbs and makes my blood run in my veins;
'Tis thine, O Love! my sinking frame but gains
New life from thee to live from hour to hour.

My soul e'er faces thine, like the sun-flower
That from the sun its beauty's gold attains,
Or as the true forget-me-not ingrains
The heavenly blue—the sun's resplendent bower.

Thou great Magician, wonderful, divine!
Who holdst my tongue, yet giv'st me power to sing;
Who mak'st me blind, and yet dost broaden my sight;

Who keep'st me deaf, except thy harp to string:
From the dust of a brute, to call me *thine*,
Thou mak'st me man to rise to godly height!

THE LIGHT OF LOVE

Couldst thou be ever mine, O Love, my Love
Whose face I cannot see, but ever dream ;
Who light'st my inner night with the full gleam
Of heaven's most blessèd dawn, and far above

This lowly life to the high flowery grove
Of the Sun-god I am lifted, where I seem
To hang upon a bright but tender beam,
And fear to fall even at its slightest move?

O Love! if thy dream-netted shadow thus
Should take me far beyond the starry way,
And keep in thrall my soul adventurous

That follows thee in vain from day to day,
How could I win thyself so glorious
And bear thy light that blinds me in its ray?

HUMAN LOVE

Love is unending light; love is sublime;
Love is eternal joy that flowers the sky;
They told me so: but then my eyes could fly
No higher than my head that measured time:

Love is unravell'd gloom; love knows no prime;
Love is but grief that breathes a life-long sigh;
Thus too they said: but from this planet high
My feet would traverse not such tearful clime.

I cannot pierce the high nor dig the low;
O Dear, mine own! thou art but what thou art—
The simple, human face I see and know,

Where meet the morning glow and evening shade;
And yet, thou art for me a thing apart—
The love I feel, enjoy, bemoan, persuade!

BIRD AND FLOWER

Far from the foaming seas a bird of time
Appear'd and sat beside a hillside flower,
And seven long summers in full-hearted rhyme
Sang songs of many a burning land and bower

Under the light and shade of smiles and tears ;—
And, though the rolling mists have pass'd him by,
Yet, like the seven-stars these seven long years
Still stand as one in Memory's answering sky !

Aye, though the flower be pluck'd by alien hands,
Still would the bird sit by the blinded branch
And sing ten million songs, as none could wrench

Its deep-soul'd perfume from him, till the sands
Of mortal life ran out, and Bird and Flower
Once more embosom'd smiled in God's own Tower !

THE INNER DOOR

I THOUGHT and thought of thee: the day-long hours
Crept slowly to the gathering evening's glow;
And Venus with her child-star, like lost powers,
The twilight-blooming West repair'd below.

I gazed and gazed through all the skiey deep
Till Night before me stood a growing gleam;
And, though the sky was moonless, still my sleep
Was there illumined by a dawning dream.

As though the soulward door of my dull sight
Were open'd by a passing angel's hand,
I saw thy soothing face before me stand

Wafted on Love's all-spanning dream-lit flight,
And found in pride I loved thee not in vain,
Till pitiless Morn that door closed once again!

LOVE AND WILL

I will not love thee: yes, and if I can,
I'll sweep the floor of Memory clean of thee,
Where worshipp'd once my heart so fervently
The little idol, in whose little span

My Heaven and Earth appear'd to meet and plan
A world of unalloyèd revelry,
And in whose hands I dream'd, to find the key
To solve my fate, and my soul's height to scan.

And every morn will bring a ray of light,
And every eve will send a whisper low,
And every night upon her page will write

The self-same tale from all her stars aglow:
Let them alone! My Will now knows its might:
I will not love thee.—Heart! did I say so?

THE IMAGE

When all the day swift waves of memories fill
My inmost mind with voices that arise
And fall upon my soul with strange replies
From one who is to me an image still;

When at its fall I sit upon a hill,
And full in view I face the western skies,
And find before me those twin-Venus eyes
That stand as one to centralise my will;

The glimmering landscape moves and melts in air,
That voice, that image and those eyes then seem
Blending into one point of faery worth:

Then gathering all my Love, and Hope, and Dream,
I stand upon the roof of this grey earth
And plunge into the fading twilight there!

A BIRTHDAY PRESENT

I woke this morn and found the skies were gay,
And magic-breathing air fill'd all the earth
With perfumed sweetness and o'erbrimming mirth ;
The baby-buds that all night sleeping lay

Did ope their tender lips to kiss the Day,
Which heavens spun from richest brightness worth
Ten thousand days, and on whose glorious birth
Love, Light and Virtue join'd to smile and play!

And many a flower peep'd out with golden dew,
As sweet and tender as a baby's hand ;
I pluck'd the best that shone in ever-bloom,

And wove a garland with my heart-strings true ;
I ran in glee to give it to a friend ;
Sweet Sister! that is thou!—or else to whom ?

TO INDIA

Eternal cradle of the muses fair!
Thou jewell'd throne of wisdom true, divine!
Whose pomp and wealth of many a holy shrine
Did Indra and his gods come down to share;

Whose mighty heart has nursed with kindness rare
A score of nations whom it calls now "mine";
Whose freedom of the soul doth far outshine
Its blood-fed countertype of keen despair.

India! thy soil is still that cherish'd home!
Ten thousand years have gone, and still thou *art*!
No fetters can enchain thy Spirit clear

And mighty Voice under this vast blue dome:
Truth on thy Tongue, and God within thy Heart.
Speak, Mother, speak! and all the world shall
hear!

THE PATRIOT

The fire that burns within a patriot's heart
No ocean can extinguish ; and its flame,
Though rising from an earth of lowly name,
Lights up the highest heavens, and strikes athwart

Its truth-unfolding wings in every part.
The one exultant, pure, unconquerable claim
Of Love and Freedom nerves his high-soul'd frame
And keeps him so, for needeth he no art.

No sword can cut his soul that stands supreme ;
No force, no guile can turn him from his path ;
No glittering gold, no breastwear glories shine

For him ; his Country's good his inner dream ;
Her greatness doth his outer Vision line,
And rises up to God beyond his death !

TO J. S. T.

At the Nilgiris

Time is the lord of happiness unknown;
And while the hour is ripe to taste the sweet,
Long-waiting Hope there hurries her fair feet
To feed her lips with richest blossoms blown.

Time is for everything; from zone to zone
The budding Spring will take her emerald seat
To make the vision of the earth complete
And bind her with the laurels of her own.

It was not chance but Heaven's stern decree
That we should meet; for, to these greenest hills
In search of Nature's soothing balm I came,

And doubly-sweet I felt when I met thee:
How glorious is the cup which Nature fills
With Love that joins to *this* thy worthy name!

THE GREAT RIVAL

In the dumb hours of night, when half the earth
Sleeps sound within the moonlight petals soft,
And here and there a waking star aloft
Weaves in her sleep some dreams of mellow mirth ;

When solemn peace enchains in all its girth
The restless breeze, where plunging meteors oft
Break through their cage and in the neighbouring croft
Seem but to fall and lose their little worth ;

I lie and breathe alone in swelling thought ;
What scorching, clamouring tumult of the day,
And what vast fields of silence now that lie !

O God ! that man should have such flower begot
From such a bud of peace and beauty, ay,
For Thy great rival, that small copper Pie !

ADAM'S HEIRS

To what great depths have fallen Adam's heirs!
The heights of Life's true beauty, ah! no more
To them are visible; beside the shore
Of treacherous gloom, they grope, 'midst aching
cares,

Self-poised, like insects, in the muddy snares
Of greed and ignorance, where every door
To Love and Light seems closed, and all the lore
Of hoarded heavens with them no pleasure shares.

And yet there is a gleam of hidden light,
That flashes on their souls betimes, and shows
The chasten'd stairs of Duty, whereon Life

May take them swifter than an angel's flight:
Could they but know their soul-betraying strife
And God within them budding like a rose!

FINIS